JOAN OF THE SWORD HAND

By S. R. CROCKETT, Author of "The Raiders," &c

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CHAPTER XXVIII.—Continued.

"How could he," demanded Joan, the soldier's daughter, sharply, "he was on duty!"

"Well," answered Margaret, still resentful and unconsoled, "he would not have done that before we were married! And it is only the first day we have been together, too, since—since——"

And she buried her head in her kerchief.

Then came a knocking at the door.

"Enter!" cried Joan imperiously, yet not a little glad of the interruption.

Werner von Orseln stood in the portal. "My lady," he said, "will you bid the Count von Loen leave his work and take some rest and sustenance. He thinks of nothing but his drill."

"Oh, yes, he does," cried the Princess Margaret; "how dare you say it, fellow? He thinks of me! Why, even now——"

She looked once more out of the window, a smile upon her face. Instantly she drew in her head again and sprang to her feet.

"Oh, he is gone! I cannot see him anywhere!" she cried, "and I never so much as heard them go! Joan, I am going to find him. He should not have gone away without bidding me goodbye! It was cruel!"

She flashed out of the room, and without waiting for tiring maid or coverture, she ran downstairs, dressed as she was in her light summer attire.

Joan stood a moment silent, looking after her with eyes in which flashed a tender light. Werner von Orseln smiled broadly—the dry smile of an ancient war captain who puts no bounds to the vagaries of women. It was an experienced smile.

"'Tis well for Kernsberg, my lady," said Werner grimly, "that you are not the Princess Margaret."

"And why?" said Joan a little haughtily. For she did not like Conrad's sister to be treated lightly even by her chief captain.

"Ah, love, love!" said Werner, nodding his head sententiously. "It is well that I ever trained you up to care for none of these things. Teach a maid to fence, and her honor needs no champion. Give her sword-cunning and you keep her from making a fool of herself about the first man who crosses her path. Strengthen her wrist, teach her to lunge and parry, and you strengthen her head. But you do credit to your instructor. You have never troubled about the follies of love. Therefore are ye Joan of the Sword Hand!"

Joan sighed another sigh, very softly this time, and her eyes, being turned away from Von Orseln, were soft and indefinitely hazy.

"Yes," she answered, "I am Joan of the Sword Hand and I never think of these things!"

Von Orseln saluted, with a face expressionless as a stone. He marched to the door, turned a third time and saluted and with heavy footsteps descended the stairs.

At the outer door Prince Conrad was dismounting. The two men saluted each other.

"Is the Duchess Joan within?" said Conrad, concealing his eagerness under the hauteur natural to a prince.

"I have just left her!" answered the chief captain.

Without a word Conrad sprang up the steps three at a time. Werner turned about and watched the young man's firm, lithe figure till it had disappeared.

"Faith of Saint Anthony!" he murmured, "I am right glad our lady cares not for love. If she did, and if you had not been a priest—well, there might have been trouble."

CHAPTER XXIX.

The Broken Bond.

Above, in the dusky light of the upper hall, Conrad and Joan stood holding each other's hands. It was the

"Death alone shall turn me back this time."

first time they had been alone together since the day on which they had walked along the sand dunes of Rugen.

Since then they seemed to have grown inexplicably close together. To Joan, Conrad now seemed much more her own—the man who loved her, whom she loved—than he had been on the island. To watch day by day for his passing in martial attire brought back the knight of the tournament whose white plume she had seen storm through the lists when, a slim secretary, she had stood with beating heart and shining eyes behind the chair of Leopold von Dessauer, Ambassador of Plassenburg.

For almost five minutes they stood thus without speech; then Joan drew away her hands.

"You forget," she said smiling, "that was forbidden in the bond."

"My lady," he said, "was not the bond for Isle Rugen alone? Here we are comrades in the strife. We must save our fatherland. I have laid aside my priesthood. If I live, I shall appeal to the Holy Father to loose me wholly from my vows."

Smilingly she put his eager argument by.

"It was of another vow I spoke. I am not the Holy Father, and for this I will not give you absolution. We are comrades, it is true—that and no more! To-morrow I ride to Kernsberg, where I will muster every man, call down the shepherds from the hills, and be back with you by the Alla before the Muscovite can attack you. I, Joan of the Sword Hand, promise it!"

She stamped her foot, half in earnest and half in mockery of the sonorous name by which she was known.

"I would rather you were Joan of the Grange at Isle Rugen, and I your jerkined servitor, cleaving the wood that you might bake the bread."

"Conrad," said Joan, shaking her head wistfully, "such thoughts are not wise for you and me to harbor. We must stand to our dignities now when the enemy threatens and the people need us. Afterwards, an it like us, we may step down together."

"Joan," said Conrad, very gravely, "do not fear for me. I have turned once from a career I never chose. Death alone shall turn me back this time."

"I knew it," she answered; "I never doubted it. But what shall we do with this poor lovesick bride of ours?"

And she told him of her interview that morning with his sister. Conrad laughed gently, yet with sympathy.

"Leave me Von Orseln, and do you take the young man," said Conrad; "then Margaret will go with you willingly and gladly."

"But she will want to return—that is, if Maurice comes, too."

"Isle Rugen?" suggested Conrad. "Send your ten men who know the road. If they could carry off Joan of the Sword Hand, they should have no difficulty with little Margaret of Courtland."

Joan clasped her hands with pleasure and relief, all unconscious that immediately behind her Margaret had entered softly and now stood arrested by the sound of her own name.

"Oh, they will have no trouble, will they not?" she said in her own heart, and smiled. "Isle Rugen? Thank you, my very dear brother and sister. You would get rid of me, separate me from Maurice while he is fighting for your precious princedoms. What is a country in comparison with a husband? I would not care a doit which country I belonged to, so long as I had Maurice with me!"

A moment or two Conrad and Joan discussed the details of the capture, while more softly than before Margaret retired to the door. She would have slipped out altogether, but that something happened just them which froze her to the spot.

A trumpet blew without—once, twice and thrice, in short and stirring blasts. Hardly had the echoes died away when she heard her brother say, "Adieu, best beloved! It is the signal which tells me that Prince Ivan is within a day's march of Courtland. I bid you goodbye, and if—if we should never meet again, do not forget that I loved you—loved you as none else could love!"

He held out his hand. Joan stood rooted to the spot, her lips moving, but no words coming forth. Then Margaret heard a hoarse cry break from her who had contemned love.

"I cannot let you go thus!" she cried, "I cannot keep the vow! It is too hard for me! Conrad! I am but a weak woman after all!"

And in a moment the Princess Margaret saw Joan the cold, Joan of the Sword Hand, Joan Duchess of Kernsberg and Hohenstein in the arms of her brother.

Whereupon, not being of set purpose an eavesdropper, Margaret went out and shut the door softly. The lovers had neither heard her come nor go. And the wife of Maurice von Lynar was smiling very sweetly as she went, but in her eyes lurked mischief.

Conrad descended the stair from the apartments of the Duchess Joan, divided between the certainty that his lips had tasted the unutterable joy and the fear lest his soul had sinned the unpardonable sin.

A moment Joan steadied herself by the window, with her hand to her breast as if to still the flying pulses of her heart. She took a step forward that she might look once more upon him ere he went. But, changing her purpose in the very act, she turned about and found herself face to face with the Princess Margaret, who was smiling subtly.

"You have granted my request?" she said softly.

Joan commanded herself with difficulty.

"What request?" she asked, for she had forgotten.

"That Maurice and I should first go with you to Kernsberg and afterwards to Plassenburg."

"I cannot go," Joan murmured, thinking aloud. "I cannot ride to Kernsberg and leave him in the front of danger!"

"A man must not be hampered by affection in the hour of danger!"

"Do you know," said Joan, "that Prince Ivan and his Muscovites are within a day's march of Courtland, and that Prince Conrad has already gone forth to meet them?"

"What?" cried Margaret, "within a day's march of the city? I must go and find my husband."

"Wait!" said Joan. "I see my way. Your husband shall come hither."

She went to the door and clapped her hands. "Send hither instantly Werner von Orseln, Alt Pikker and the Count von Loen."

She waited with the latch of the door in her hand till she heard their footsteps upon the stair. They entered together and saluted.

"Gentlemen," said Joan, "the enemy is at the gate of the city. We shall need every man. Who will ride to Kernsberg and bring back succor?"

"Your highness," said Werner von Orseln, respectfully, "if the enemy be so near, and a battle imminent, the man is no soldier who would willingly be absent. But we are your servants. Choose you one to go; or, if it seem good to you, more than one. Bid us go, and on our heads it shall be to escort you safely to Kernsberg and bring back reinforcements."

The Princess came closer to Joan and slipped a hand into hers.

"Von Lynar shall go!" said Joan.

Whereat Maurice held down his

"A man must not be hampered by affection in the hour of danger!"

head, Margaret clapped her hands, and the other two stood stolidly awaiting instructions, as became their position.

"At what hour shall I depart, my lady?" said Maurice.

"Now! So soon as you can get the horses ready!"

"But your Grace must have time to make her preparations!"

"I am not going to Kernsberg. I stay here!" said Joan, stating a fact.

Werner von Orseln was just going out of the door, confiding to Alt Pikker that as soon as he saw the Princess put her hand in their lady's he knew they were safe. At the sound of Joan's words he was startled into crying out loudly, "What?" At the same time he faced about with the frown on his face which he wore when he corrected an irregularity in the ranks.

(To be continued.)

NEW CURE FOR SNAKE'S BITE.

Follows Plan of "Hair of the Dog That Bit You."

"Take a hair of the dog that bit you," is an old saw that, as a suggested remedy, has led many a man out of the frying pan into the fire, and it cannot certainly be recommended as a cure suitable for modern times, when an antidote is more recommendable.

Dogs are not, however, the only animals whose bite is to be feared; and those people whose travels have led them to far lands know that poisonous snakes are much more to be dreaded.

Though by far the greater proportion of those persons thus bitten die, there is a certain number who recover, thanks to prompt measures, and thanks also to the administration of the exact remedy which any particular snake bite requires.

It has lately been reported that, on the principle of the old adage mentioned above—which thus serves a turn—an almost certain cure for snake bite is the injection of a small portion of the bile of the reptile which has attacked any one, and which—the snake being generally killed on the spot—is naturally at hand.

The gall bladder is extracted, its contents filtered, and the fluid injected under the skin. The method sounds somewhat complicated; but no snake-bitten person will complain if by this means he escapes a rapid death.

The experiments made have given the best results, those recovering from the poisonous bite of a South American snake coming off with nothing worse than an abscess at the point of penetration of the serpent's tooth.—Chambers' Journal.

What Caused the Noise.

A lady, having occasion to consult a friend, called at her home, but was unable at first to obtain admittance. Hideous sounds suggesting the caterwauling of all the cats, accompanied by what appeared to be the trampling of an elephant upon the keyboard of a piano, issued from the house.

The matter being imperative, and wishing at least to leave a message, our friend redoubled her efforts at the bell in the hope of ringing hard enough to stop the clamor within.

Succeeding at last in her endeavor, the din ceased abruptly and the door was opened by a trim German maid. The family, it appeared, was out, and the maid said:

"Ven de cat's away den plays dot mouse der piano."

THE MISSING MAN

By MARY R. P. HATCH

Author of "The Bank Tragedy"

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CHAPTER XX.

"You Are Henry Ashley."

He then spoke of the examination, of when being found of unsound mind he was sent to an asylum, of his escape and supposed death by drowning. "With the cunning of insanity it now appeared that Mr. Hamilton had induced a weak-minded vagrant to exchange clothes with him, and with the disguise thus afforded succeeded in getting clear of the town. The man who resembled Hamilton in general appearance was afterwards drowned and identified as a patient of the asylum chiefly by his clothes, as the body was unrecognizable from having been so long in the water.

"It must have been a strange fatality or blind instinct which led him to seek employment at his own mill, and a boarding place at the house of Mrs. Fry, a woman previously well known to himself and wife, the recipient, as she avers, of many favors from himself and wife.

"He saw his wife and children at church. His wife was greatly moved by his resemblance to her husband. He was, also, much excited by her looks and those of Perley and Clara. He knows nothing of all this now, but I can prove it by the testimony of Dan Fry and his mother. From that time he began to watch her house, his former home, one night standing in a pouring rain until he was drenched and made sick in consequence. Although he knew little of music previously, he purchased a violin and became a good performer in a short time, but now he has returned to his normal ignorance and cannot play at all. I shall call to the stand an eminent specialist who will explain to you that this sort of dual existence is not unknown in science, although it is so uncommon as to be remarkable. Mrs. Hamilton shared in the feelings of her husband, but could not explain them. She repressed them, therefore, as much as possible; but when her little boy was lost and returned through the efforts of Primus Edes, as he was called, she allowed her heart to rule her hands to the extent of showing her gratitude by gifts for his personal comfort and convenience at Mrs. Fry's.

"Now comes the false claimant, Mr. Hamilton, or Ashley, on the scene, safe, as he supposes, in his fraudulent claim, because he thinks his wronged brother is dead. He is the exact image of the cashier, as we all know, and he was received by Grovedale people with open arms. His extraordinary nerve, ingenuity, and fertility of resource carried him through various tests and examinations, and he was installed in the place of the true and lawful owner and tenant of the Hamilton estate. But there was one, gentlemen, who did not receive him. It was Mrs. Hamilton. She could not believe he was her husband and what testimony is better than that of a wife who for seven years lived with him and came to know all his ways, his movements, his tricks of manner, everything which goes to make up personality, which we all know does not consist entirely of features, height, voice, complexion? Personality is of a more subtle, elusive nature. It may elude recognition by all except the more intimate friends. In this case it evaded all but that of the wife, the true, loving woman who, through all would not be cheated by a false resemblance."

Then in a low, impressive voice Mr. Morley broached the matter of physical odor which, exhaled from the material body, enables a dog to distinguish his master from all other persons. Lost children, slaves, fugitives from justice, have been tracked by this physical odor, so powerful and unmistakable as to cling to articles of clothing worn by the person. Many people have the sense of smell strongly developed, as others have that of sight, taste, hearing; and Mrs. Hamilton was thus highly endowed, he said.

Then the plaintiff's counsel went on to speak of the shot fired at his client in the grounds fraudulently held and occupied by the defendant, which he attributed to some person interested in removing him beyond reach of making trouble. "We will suppose," said Mr. Morley, "that Ashley had at last recognized the true claimant in Primus Edes, and that he realized his own dangerous position, from which nothing could extricate him but the death of this man. We will suppose that he saw him approaching the Hamilton house and shoots him from his window and then rushes upon the scene flinging the pistol one side, and was there, as we know he was, before Mr. Carter could get there. Or, we will suppose that some other person, Solomon Marks, for instance, got possession of Dan Fry's pistol and followed Edes, shot him, and disappeared down the river.

"It is well known in Grovedale, and can be proved by half a score of witnesses, that Solomon Marks was twice closeted with the defendant, and that he went to the Fry house, when it is easy to suppose he found an opportunity to get possession of the pistol, to make it appear that my client committed suicide—for there is no doubt but that the shot was fired to kill him. Now, it is perfectly clear to me and must be to you, that the false claimant undertook, either by his own hand, or another's, to rid himself of a troublesome person—troublesome, because the true claimant. But did he succeed? No; the very shot fired to send Vane Hamilton out of the world restored him to the full possession of his faculties. Strange, yet true! Can we doubt, after such a manifestation in the overruling for good of the Divine Providence, which so often says to crime, 'Thus far shalt thou go, but no farther,' he recovered to prosecute his claims to his family and estate?"

It was then five o'clock, and an adjournment was taken until the next morning.

When the little court house bell began to ring next day the streets rapidly filled, and soon the small room was thronged with eager spectators. The work of the day was entered upon promptly by the calling of the witness, George Barnstead, to the stand.

He gave a straightforward testimony, corresponding to Mr. Morley's presentation of it in his opening argument.

"I sat in Portland depot, near to the newsstand, waiting for Hurd, who was to go on with me to Bethel. I saw standing, irresolutely, at a little distance, a man whom I now know to be Vane Hamilton. He was dressed exactly as described by the advertisement. He looked about him as if he did not know what to do. Finally, another man entered who stopped to stare at the first. Then, as if recollecting himself, he went off a little way, but still looked at him. The first man was aware of this scrutiny, it appeared, for at last he walked up to him and asked:

"'You appear to know me. Who am I? What is my name?'

"The other seemed disconcerted a moment by the inquiry, but answered in a second or two.

"'Your name is Henry Ashley. I know you well.'

"They talked together a few minutes, but in a lower tone. I did not hear what they said, and shortly afterward they went off together."

"Mr. Barnstead," cross-questioned Mr. Ferguson, "you say the first man looked about him as if he did not know where he was. What was his expression? Was it vague and uncertain or wide-awake?"

"Rather vague, sir, as if he did not know where he was."

"Was this the other's expression?"

"No, sir; his was the reverse—watchful, wide-awake."

"Their expression was totally unlike, and yet their eyes looked alike."

"Yes, sir."

"When do you usually make your trips, Mr. Barnstead."

"I have no regular time."

"This time you went on May."

"Yes, sir."

"What date?"

"The fifteenth of May."

"How do you know?"

"I know by my remembrance of the day and by my diary."

"Do you note the time of your trips in your diary?"

"Yes, sir."

"Please produce the book if you have it about you."

Mr Barnstead took it from his pocket and handed it to the defendant's counsel, who, however, did not take it.

"No, read it yourself." Mr. Barnstead did so.

"'Started for Bethel. Waited in Portland depot for Hurd. We went on together.'"

"Now, Mr. Barnstead, turn, if you please, to the following Thursday. What did you do that day?"

"'Waited in Portland depot for Hurd a good hour. D—— take him for punctuality,'" read Barnstead.

"Now which of these dates was the one you saw the men meet?"

"The first."

"Where did you and Hurd go?"

"We went to Mechanic Falls."

"What did you do then?"

"Took orders for goods."

"Together?"

"Yes. He for his firm, I for mine."

"Did you stay all night?"

"Yes."

"Did you drink?"

"Yes, sir; a glass or two."

"Did you not drink more than a glass or two. Did you not drink nearer a dozen?"

"Perhaps."

"In short, were you not considerably worse for what you drank, so much so that you had to stay in bed a day or two?"

"I did."

"Wasn't your head in a confounded muddle, and didn't you tell Hurd so?"

"I presume so."

"Could you swear to any event that took place within a week or two of that time?"

"I can swear I went to Bethel and Mechanic Falls."

"Yes, that is in your note book. Did you speak of meeting the two men, or seeing them meet, to your friend that week?"

"I don't recollect."

"Could you swear it was not Thursday you saw them—saw them meet?"

"No, sir, I couldn't; but I think it was the Friday before."

Mr. Barnstead, slightly flushed and irate, left the witness stand.

Mrs. Hamilton's testimony came next, and was given in a graceful, though shrinking manner. She related the various tests to which she had subjected the two claimants at various times, and said that both had responded readily, but that the defendant invariably hesitated for a moment before replying, but that the plaintiff did not.

The judge at this juncture proposed that she subject them to some test in the presence of the jury, if there was any point which remained unsettled in her own mind.

"There is one," said Mrs. Hamilton. "Is it of a nature to be conclusive?" he asked.

"I think it is. It is something that I do not know myself, but that my husband does.

"Please state it."

"I wish to know the whereabouts of a small diamond button, or stud, that he gave me. It was his mother's, and I told him I was afraid I should lose it if I wore it. He laughed and said he would take care of it for me, and he did. I never asked to know where he kept it, and he never told me."

"One claimant may be taken into the next room while the other one answers," said the judge. "The plaintiff, as the first party, may remain and answer first."

There was a decided stir in the court room at the proposition, so out of the usual course; and as the defendant arose and walked into the small office adjoining the court room, yet beyond hearing, the audience hardly breathed, so deep was the feeling in expectation of something unusual about to take place.

But the answer was commonplace enough.

"I took it to the bank," said the plaintiff.

"For what purpose was the button used?"

"My wife fastened her night-robe with it."

"In what part of the bank did you keep it?"

"In a small drawer of the safe."

"Is it there now?"

"I don't know. I had forgotten the matter entirely till now."

(To be continued.)

MUCH NEED FOR CAREFULNESS.

Beekeepers and Newspaper Men on Common Ground.

At a recent convention of beekeepers in Jenkintown, Pa., Archibald H. Mayhew of Sunbury held hundreds of bees in his hands and permitted the little insects to wander at will through his hair and beard. Some even got up his sleeves and down his shirt without causing him any inconvenience.

"But," said Mr. Mayhew, bee-covered and smiling, "I could not conduct this startling exhibition with any but Caucasian bees. A novice at bee-keeping if he should attempt to imitate me with an ordinary species would take his life in his hands. Bee-keeping, as a matter of fact, is a pretty dangerous matter for uninformed persons to take up. An ignorant, reckless beekeeper at large among a lot of valuable hives is apt to do himself and them as much harm as an ignorant, reckless 'answers to correspondents' man will do to his newspaper and its subscribers."

Mr. Mayhew paused, brushed a half dozen bees from his mustache and resumed:

"Perhaps you have never considered how important a post the 'answers to correspondents' man holds on a newspaper. To such a man the people come with all their troubles—lawsuits, illnesses, worries, fears, wrongs, everything.

"And unless the answerer is wise and careful some such paragraph as this is apt to creep into his column every now and then:

"'Mrs. T. Willie Pitcoe—The reply given you last Thursday was a mistake. We should have said a quarter of a grain of strychnine, not a quarter of a pound. It is impossible in this column for us to recommend undertakers.'"